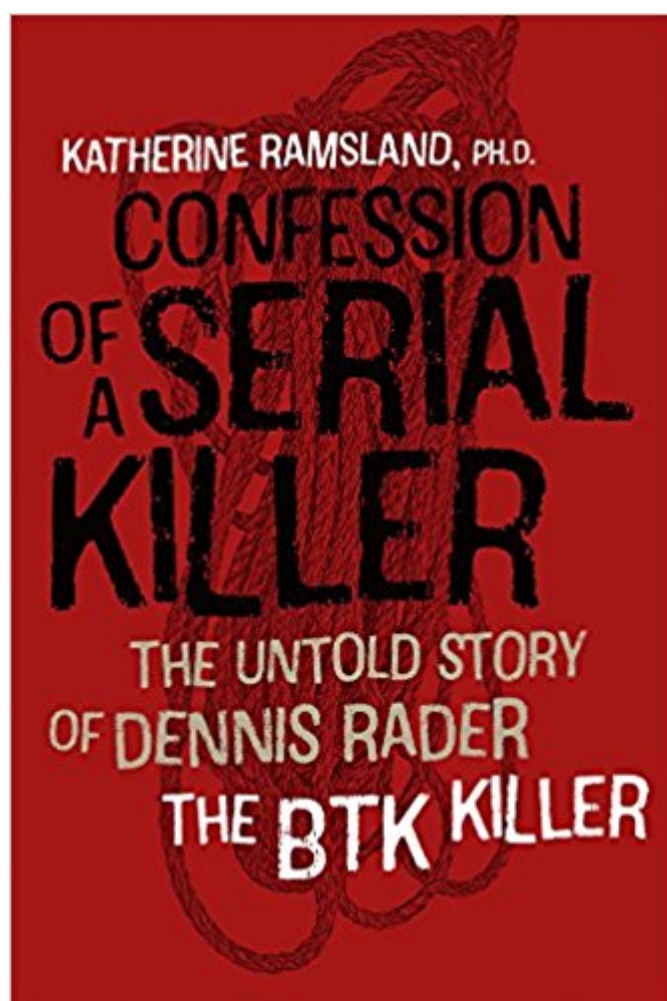




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# Confession Of A Serial Killer: The Untold Story Of Dennis Rader, The BTK Killer



## Synopsis

In 1974, Dennis Lynn Rader stalked and murdered a family of four in Wichita, Kansas. Since adolescence, he had read about serial killers and imagined becoming one. Soon after killing the family, he murdered a young woman and then another, until he had ten victims. He named himself "B.T.K." (bind, torture, kill) and wrote notes that terrorized the city. He remained on the loose for thirty years. No one who knew him guessed his dark secret. He nearly got away with his crimes, but in 2004, he began to play risky games with the police. He made a mistake. When he was arrested, Rader's family, friends, and coworkers were shocked to discover that B.T.K. had been among them, going to work, raising his children, and acting normal. This case stands out both for the brutal treatment of victims and for the ordinary public face that Rader, a church council president, had shown to the outside world. Through jailhouse visits, telephone calls, and written correspondence, Katherine Ramsland worked with Rader himself to analyze the layers of his psyche. Using his drawings, letters, interviews, and Rader's unique codes, she presents in meticulous detail the childhood roots and development of one man's motivation to stalk, torture, and kill. She reveals aspects of the dark motivations of this most famous of living serial killers that have never before been revealed. In this book Katherine Ramsland presents an intelligent, original, and rare glimpse into the making of a serial killer and the potential darkness that lives next door.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Confession of a Serial Killer stands out as the first [book] that takes the form of a

collaboration with the serial killer. Unlike many crime books, it does not merely speculate about a predator's deranged thoughts and schemes but rather plunges the reader into them, revealing in remarkable detail how a well-known serial killer at the end of his life sees himself.

• Rachel Shteir, The New York Times Magazine

“Ramsland says her purpose [in writing the book] was to give criminologists, forensic psychologists and others some first-hand insights into a serial killer's mind, by relating the stories he tells, and how he tells them.

• Wichita Eagle

“For readers interested in the workings of the mind, psychology, true crime, and criminal justice, this is a unique work, in which the author is a conduit to the thinking process, rather than the descriptor of events.

• Library Journal

“In Confession of a Serial Killer, Dr. Katherine Ramsland got Dennis Rader to reveal the dark fantasies that led him to murder.

• Rolling Stone

“Groundbreaking. . . . An unparalleled look at the inner workings of one of America's most notorious serial murderers - and presents in fascinating, agonizing detail the roots and development of one extraordinary man's motivation to stalk, torture, and kill.

• Broadway World

“Dr. Ramsland offers us insights into the mind of a serial killer rarely seen in criminological literature. I could not put this book down. I am absolutely fascinated by her ability to forge a relationship with BTK that allowed him to share the innermost secrets of his Dark Side. This is a must-read book for anyone wanting to understand the fantasies, behaviors, and mind-set of one of the most notorious serial sexual predators of our time.

• (Eric W. Hickey, PhD, author of Serial Murderers and Their Victims)

“Based on her extensive, years-long communications with Dennis Rader, Katherine Ramsland's Confession of a Serial Killer not only presents a definitive portrait of one of our country's most infamous modern criminals but provides a uniquely illuminating look into the workings of the psychopathic mind. By combining Rader's autobiographical writings with her own expert commentary, Ramsland guides us through that terrifying labyrinth, shedding brilliant light on every shadowy corner along the way.

• (Harold Schechter, author of The Serial Killer Files)

“Katherine Ramsland has crafted a one-of-a-kind book, allowing the reader to journey directly into the mind of BTK, a.k.a. Dennis Rader, a serial killer who eluded authorities for over thirty years. I could ramble on effusively about what she has accomplished through her dialogue with Rader and her review of tons of prime source material, but I won't. Just know this: It's a hell of a book. Buy it. Read it. It may keep you up at night, but you won't regret it.

• (Gregg McCrary, former FBI

profiler) – “I wish I knew then what I know now. Katherine Ramsland has peeled back the layers of this serial killer. Her work not only benefits the families of the victims but also will be cathartic for our community as a whole to understand how evil exists.” (Nola Tedesco Foulston, Esq., former district attorney for Sedgwick County, Kansas)

When it comes to books about serial killers and bizarre true crimes, I have read more than my fair share. I have read many theories on how a person develops into a serial killer, always looking for further understanding, or some sort of explanation that I hadn't heard before. I can honestly say that Katherine Ramsland's book: "Confession of a Serial Killer: The Untold Story of Dennis Rader- The BTK Killer" has achieved the great feat of giving readers something more. The book is largely told through Rader himself through an exchange of letters and interviews with Ramsland. This makes for highly compelling reading. Hearing it straight from the horse's mouth is always best. Rader digs back and details the many events in his childhood that were likely the beginning of his developing into a serial killer. He explains how he operated, the things he did, and all sorts of various tidbits along the way. He also tells you his account of all the murders and a large variety of details involved in the pre-kill stages, the murder itself, and the aftermath. He attempts to divulge what was going on in his mind at the time and many of his observations in retrospect about his thought process seem very likely to have been part of his motivation. He seems to be genuine in much of what he tells. Of course, you never know how much of the stuff a serial killer tells you is actual fact, but it does seem like he is at a point where he has nothing to lose and may as well just tell the true story. Ramsland notes how Rader's narcissism and grandiose mindset may have contributed to various things he explains, but overall Rader doesn't seem to shy away from much of anything, including the embarrassment and shame that came with much of what he did. Ramsland presents a large number of factors that likely contributed to Rader becoming a serial killer. Her research is truly excellent and, although it may seem like a lot to take in, she explains a large variety of the ingredients that ultimately become the stew of a serial killer. All the explanations are another important component to making this book such an excellent read. She importantly points out that society's basic model on serial killers needs to be updated and that some of the widely accepted answers are not in fact the case. We learn more about the mindset of these killers as time goes on and things that were once deemed fact should now be seen as possibility to take into account. For instance, this book does a great job of explaining that not all sexual homicides actually need to involve some sort of sex with the victim. In Rader's case, (I never knew this prior to reading this book) he didn't have sex with any of the victims; he got his gratification and relief through viewing a victim in bondage. It was the

ropes, the terror the victim was thinking about, the image of a person in bondage, and the strangling that brought about his sexual gratification. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in true crime and serial killers. It is very thorough and well articulated. Rader's explanations and theories are mostly satisfying for the reader looking for a better understanding. Congratulations to Katherine Ramsland for adding an important chapter to serial killer literature that will likely go down in history as one of the best in the field.

This book involves two individuals telling the tale of Dennis Rader, The BTK Killer. We have the author Katherine Ramsland who carries a PhD degree along with Dennis Rader, the psychopathic murderer of eleven individuals. I felt disgust when Rader described how he carried out his dastardly dark deeds as he appeared to enjoy his role in enlightening the reader along with the victims loved ones in the courtroom. He was center stage in his role as an educator. Author Ramsland delves into the psychological reasons as to why Rader acted as he did. Rader claims he felt conflicted. Here he was "a good Christian man" taking part in behavior he knew was wrong. He enjoyed the planning involved in this cat and mouse game with the police and the community. Since he didn't wear any mask he knew he had to kill his victims so as not to leave any witnesses. He felt shame and disgust when his wife caught him dressing in women's clothing. I also felt that Rader relished the feeling when he was caught with an attitude of "Boy did I ever fool everyone, didn't I? You would have never suspected me to be the BTK killer." Any remorse Rader may have subsequently felt would probably be due to the fact that he was caught. I found some parts of the psychological interpretation to be long-winded. The book contains twelve pages of photographs but seven of the pages contain diagrams with small printing that I didn't bother to try and decipher. Was this book written to try to understand serial killers and their tricks or just another attempt by Dennis Rader to relive and relish his sordid past? I don't claim to know the answer to this question.

So you want to know how a serial killer thinks and why they do what they do? well this book has the answers and they aren't as mysterious as you may think. I highly recommend it and I've been reading true crime for 25 years. However if you are looking for a straight BTK book about what happened, this is not the right choice read this book only after you read one of those mass market paperbacks or watch his confessions online. Ramsland is very clinical, she let's Rader do the talking and only interjects when necessary. Too many of these kinds of books the author over shadows with narrative but not Ramsland, she doesn't have a PhD for nothing, she knows it's important to let Rader do the talking mis-spellings and all for the sake of good analysis. She isn't trying to prove to

you how great or how smart she is, just look up her credentials and you will see that she has no reason to. Be prepared to actually use your brain people, this isn't just some sensationalizing book, it's an excellent book and had full approval from the victims families.

Hard to evaluate a book about 1/2 of which consists of correspondence with the author. His narrative progresses from bizarre to horrifying to enraging. When it switches to the author's analytical discussion, it eases, of course, but an abstract view of a man who ambushed people in their homes and then committed atrocities against them which I almost wouldn't think a person could carry out, even in war, just doesn't provide any comfort. Not only did Rader do horrible things to women whose homes he broke into, he liked to tie himself up and put his head in a plastic bag or hang himself to the point of asphyxiation. Too bad he didn't kill himself. I cannot imagine the horror this man's family experienced. There is an update to the book-an afterword-in which Rader says he would have voted for trump. Cost him a star.

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